Annex D: The Security Environment

A Changing Landscape

The emergence of unconventional and asymmetric threats, radical Islamic terrorist efforts aimed at the US and other developed members of the global economy, and the burdens of post-conflict pacification operations have stretched the US military, even as relative US military strength is probably at an historic apogee. Protection afforded by geographic distance has diminished, while challenges and threats from groups like radical, Islamic transnational terrorists have grown. While the current trend toward regional and global integration may render catastrophic inter-state war less likely, the stability and legitimacy of the conventional political order in regions vital to the United States is increasingly under pressure from a variety of sources. There is now a nexus of dangerous new actors, methods, and capabilities that imperil the US, its interests and its alliances in strategically significant ways.

With the present and likely future stretching of US forces, responses to new regional conflicts will probably necessitate new coalition functions with greater non-American troop contributions. While modularization and the ability to deploy rapidly will maintain the continued relevance of US military force in deterring and influencing regional conflicts, the views and actions of our regional allies will likely loom larger than they did before the onset of current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been and probably will continue to be less unity of purpose between the US and its allies. There is no longer a common perception of the threat. Managing this tension will require extensive engagement with regional partners, whose response to US initiatives will often be situationally-based. Simply stated, allies may not provide US policy with blanket support. If our allies disagree with US policy, they may attempt to influence US actions through multilateral organizations like the UN or the World Trade Organization, formal and informal bilateral agreements, ad hoc groupings or coalitions, and even Information Operations, if they think the situation warrants it. This changed perception on the part of US allies and the need to work more intensively with them will be a complicating factor in an already challenging future security landscape.

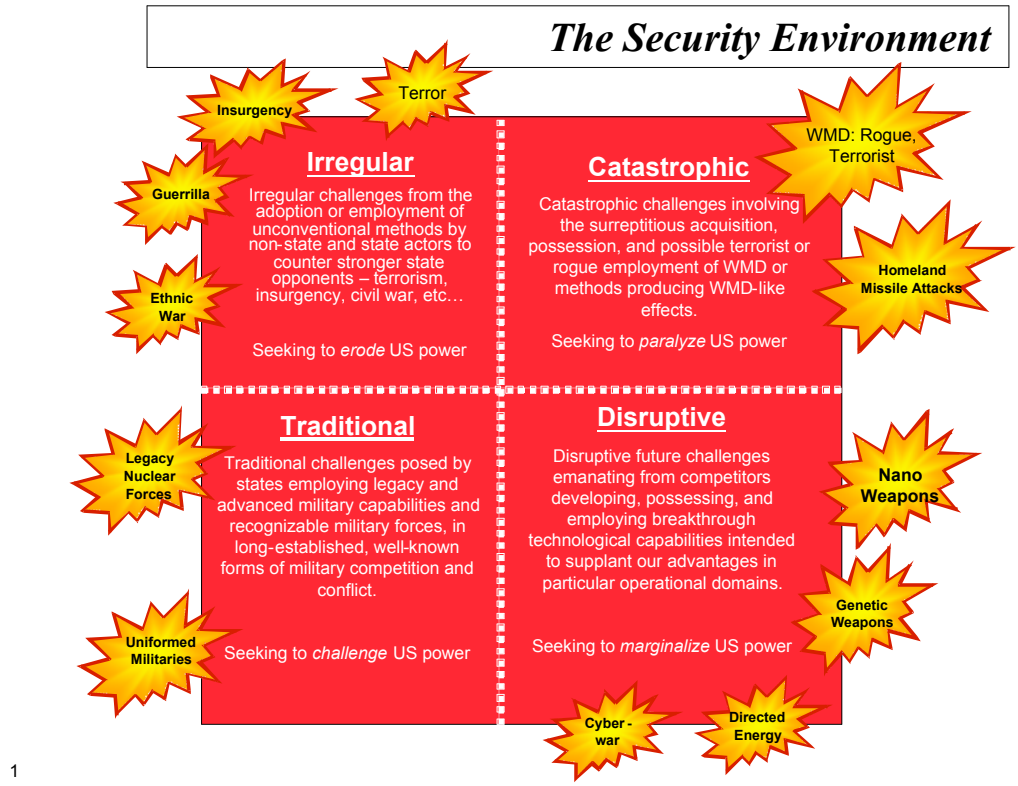
Persistent and Emerging Challenges

The *National Defense Strategy* has advanced a typology of four new types of complex, interrelated, persistent and emerging security challenges--**irregular**, **traditional, catastrophic, and disruptive**--to which the US military will have to respond.

These challenges are based on the recognition the old threat paradigm, focused primarily on other states and especially the military force-on-force capabilities of known enemies, is necessary but no longer sufficient after the attack on 9/11. **Many of these new threats--especially those of radical fundamentalist terrorists not controlled by traditional states--will not be deterred by our overwhelming military superiority and will present challenges that do not lend themselves to traditional "threat-response" solutions.** Our old concepts of security, deterrence and warning, and

traditional intelligence approaches to assessing threat capability, intent, and will, do not completely apply in this new strategic environment.

The four persistent and emerging challenges and their definitions, depicted in the chart below, capture many of the issues in the future security environment. However, their boundaries are neither precise nor discrete and thus in some situations will overlap, may occur simultaneously, or offer no easily discernible transition from one challenge to another:



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Irregular Challenges--Terrorism: The Most Immediate Danger

The most immediate and pervasive threat the US faces is the irregular challenge. Irregular forces could arise in any insurgency or operation where the Joint Force might be called upon to act. Among irregular forces, the gravest threat is from global transnational terrorists, especially from radical Sunni extremists like al-Qaeda. Terrorists showed on 9/11 that even irregular warfare can have strategic consequences. Despite their anger at what they perceive as the Godless, materialistic Western world that is undermining their own culture and beliefs, terrorists have enthusiastically embraced new Western technologies (communicating through the internet, using satellite telephones, etc.). The result is the greater empowerment of the individual terrorist. These technologies, along with better weapons and increasing skills, have contributed to the increased lethality and impact of the individual terrorist or group.

There are now global extremist networks and linkages among them. The main terrorist group al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Ladin, while still existing, has mutated and spawned

a next-generation network of worldwide associates and affiliates, a kind of al-Qaeda 2.0. These newer terrorists--like Bin Ladin's original group--operate a decentralized, flat network that is hard to break. These associates often work independently and are showing themselves to be fairly capable at their deadly missions.

Unlike states which use asymmetric methods on an as-needed basis, for terrorists and irregulars asymmetric warfare is almost always the only means, to achieve their goals of upsetting established norms and garnering international publicity and attention.

Due to its unique world position, the US has become a key focus of the terrorists' anger. Terrorists perceive the US as the chief proponent, regulator, and the major beneficiary of globalization, which they believe is drastically changing their world for the worse. Globalization promises a more open and interconnected word, but the terrorists do not want this. Terrorists and their allies focus on an unbalanced distribution of wealth, power, cultural influence (primarily from the West), and resources. They have tapped into the anger of individuals and groups with deep political and economic grievances and have channeled that anger into a generalized religious battle

Al Qaeda and its offshoots operate clandestinely in economically advanced countries and both clandestinely and more or less openly with impunity in developing countries or failing states. Terrorists benefit from conditions in ungoverned/under-governed areas.

Of particular note is the danger from the flood of conventional weapons, including MANPADS, on the international grey arms market since the end of the Cold War. These weapons feed both terrorists and insurgencies throughout the world.

Traditional Challenges: Dangerous But Less Likely

Traditional threats of aggression from regional adversaries or an adversarial coalition remain the most demanding and intensive missions for the Joint Force, but traditional challenges will be the exception rather than the rule. These possible high intensity Major Combat Operations--like the last two wars against Iraq--would be stressful, but they are less likely in the near term. Indeed, there are currently no regional or global peer military competitors to the US. Only a few countries—North Korea, China, and possibly Iran—might either have, or plan to develop, the forces or possess the will to directly challenge the US. However, because these traditional threats pose a potential danger, the Joint Force must nonetheless be prepared for them.

For example, the potential threat of major combat operations with North Korea will remain a possibility, though probably unlikely, for the next decade—assuming that North Korea does not internally collapse. In addition to North Korea's traditional military, it likely possesses a limited number of nuclear weapons. A possible war with North Korea could be extremely costly, but its leaders probably understand that the result would be catastrophic. North Korea remains a threat, but it has been contained and stalemated for over fifty years. Additionally, the Republic of Korea continues its ongoing engagement policy that key regional players, China and Japan, fully support. These efforts further decrease the possibility of another war on the Korean peninsula.

Iran is another potential challenge. It perceives itself surrounded by the US or its allies, since the US is playing a greater role than before in the Persian Gulf, which Iran sees as its natural sphere of influence. While it cannot match the US militarily, Iran does have large conventional forces, is developing new missile systems, and over the next decade could pose a traditional challenge. More ominously, Iran has a nuclear program and refuses to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency requirements.

China--though it is in the midst of becoming a major world economic power and further developing its military capabilities--is not currently a regional peer competitor. China may yet become a regional military (but not global) peer competitor by 2020 with better missiles and an exponential increase in force projection capability, but it unclear if it will be antagonistic toward the US. Much will depend on how its economy, political development, and resulting regional intentions develop.

Other traditional challenges could result from a regional aggressor who miscalculates the risk of US involvement and thereby threatens what the US perceives to be in its vital interest. This mistake could generate US involvement in a traditional regional fight in areas that may be hard to predict far in advance.

Traditional does not mean static. For example, the Joint Force will likely face a quantitative change in threat missiles. The issue is not just intercontinental ballistic missiles, which tend to be easier to find and track through intelligence means, but the growing development of land-attack cruise missiles. The US homeland, US military forces and CONUS and foreign airfields, seaports, and sea lines of communication will be increasingly vulnerable as these missiles become more numerous. By 2020 a number of countries will produce land-attack cruise missiles. Some could become proliferators and put missiles in the possession of otherwise third-rate militaries, which could then use them against US forces or to prevent US access to a possible battlefield.

An Emerging Catastrophic Challenge

Terrorists, other non-state actors, and rogue states like North Korea and Iran are acquiring or trying to develop weapons of mass destruction and effects (WMD/E) to challenge the US and its allies. These weapons are more dangerous than conventional ones. Even the use of radiological (vice nuclear) devices would have a major psychological effect, if used in a US or Western city. At least 25 countries, as well as al-Qaeda and other non-state groups, are working on developing or acquiring WMD as either a possible weapon or for leverage or deterrence against potential US pre-emptive action. Terrorists will likely acquire some WMD capability in the next decade and will likely try to use it against the US, though chemical and biological weapons are more likely than nuclear weapons due their cost, and lower signature and detectability. WMD will also become a more dangerous issue with better delivery systems, in particular the proliferation of theater ballistic and cruise missiles.

Possible Disruptive Challenges

As the result of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, most possible adversarial countries or groups will seek to avoid fighting the US, especially on U.S. terms. Even countries with large conventional forces, will develop their militaries to deal with their immediate rivals or regional threats than the US. Except for the countries noted above, few nations will shape their forces or acquisition strategy to directly rival or fight the US, because they clearly understand the power of US weapons, training, technology, and leadership.

However, if faced with a looming conflict with the US, possible adversaries will seek to buy the latest technology in niche areas to counteract key US capabilities. These include air defense systems, ballistic and other missile systems, WMD systems, and command and control systems. These possible opponents will buy the latest and most technologically advanced equipment—which could include breakthrough technology—that they believe will disrupt and be most effective against perceived US strengths: US command and control, communications and computers, and intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance systems (C4ISR), and our space-based systems. These possibly disruptive systems will be perhaps indigenously developed, purchased and modified from off the shelf weapons or the most advanced components, or bought from proliferators (some of whom may be our allies). In specific areas our potential adversaries may acquire this cutting edge technology sooner than the Joint Force.

These advanced technologies will be increasingly available to both state and non-state actors. Even the most primitive military adversaries will be potentially 'space capable' as a result of the commercial sector's provision of such products as high-bandwidth satellite communications, imagery, navigation signals, and weather data.

Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and Military Forces

Since 9/11 the US has been involved in a GWOT that has no immediate end in sight. Terrorism is an asymmetric method used to force their will on others. We are now and for the foreseeable future will be using military means to attack terrorists in Afghanistan and facing both terrorists and an insurgency in Iraq. While we can and must deal immediately with current terrorists, terrorism's root causes are complex, long-standing and not susceptible to short, purely military solutions. **Therefore, a successful GWOT may well take on the coloration of the Cold War or the War on Drugs--a long-term, persistent commitment with no point of clear or decisive victory. Nevertheless, we may eventually control terrorism and, through a variety of means, mitigate its ability to harm the US and its allies. However, once we resolve the battles for Afghanistan and Iraq, the military component of the GWOT may be less central.** In the future, the GWOT will require not only a military solution but an international effort with our allies and friendly states, combined with intelligence and police actions, to keep the terrorists off balance and less deadly.

The Most Likely Future Conflicts

Small Scale Contingencies (SSCs), Lesser Contingencies (LCs), and Support and Stability Operations (SASO) will be the most likely conflicts the Joint Force will face.

This has been the case for the past 20 years, with the exception of Iraq and Afghanistan. Many parts of the world have not been able to reap the benefits of globalization, and many states are weak, poorly governed or failing; it is often these same states that face major economic and social problems, such as population bulges and the ill effects of rapid urbanization. Even without the presence of transnational terrorists, these explosive situations will increase the pressure for the US to intervene throughout the world to restore order, prevent anarchy or civil wars, or to deal with economic collapse and natural disasters.

Possible Joint Force activities will range from minor involvement to operations that can stress either the whole force or key parts of it. Joint Force actions could include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations, security assistance and military training support, peacekeeping, peacemaking, counterdrug operations, and counterinsurgency operations. Any of these operations could expand and become more dangerous and intensive, slipping almost seamlessly from security assistance to peacekeeping, peacemaking, and then to counterinsurgency operations (or a combination of these and other actions). The Joint Operations Environment of the future will spawn many problems, including urban operations. All of these possible actions could follow one another or occur simultaneously in different parts of the country or even the same city. This will make military planning increasingly complicated.

The most likely areas where the US military could be asked to intervene include Sub-Saharan Africa and the "Arc of Instability," the belt of states running from the Balkans through the Middle East and the Horn of Africa into East Asia and Southeast Asia. During any intervention, the US may find well-financed and well-armed insurgencies. These insurgencies may be allied or cooperate on an ad hoc basis with transnational criminals like narco-traffickers or terrorist groups, or be both insurgents and criminals at the same time. Traditional and irregular opponents will likely have studied how the US conducts warfare and stability operations. They will likely be adaptive and flexible, try to wear down US resolve through threats of high casualties and Information Operations campaigns, use all available information age technology, and any and all operational means, such as drawing the US into urban warfare and access denial.

Iraq as an Example of the Emerging Security Environment

Operation Iraqi Freedom illustrates many persistent threats and challenges in the future security environment. Following the extremely successful Major Combat Operation, the US expected that involvement in Iraq would quickly become a relatively simple stability operation. In reality, military efforts there have become like other military actions we can expect in the future: challenges not resolved by decisive combat. We have moved from Major Combat Operations to fighting different factions of irregulars: former regime elements who are predominantly Sunni, Shi'a radicals, criminals, as well as transnational terrorists; they all oppose both the US and efforts to create a new Iraqi government. All these current adversaries are becoming increasingly sophisticated and learning better tactics as they fight. At the same time, we are involved in military training as well as reconstruction and civil affairs efforts. While needing to focus on the

immediate threat of destabilization posed by the insurgency, the ultimate solution is not just better application of military force but a long-term and complicated investment of all elements of American power to bolster a new Iraqi government that can change the fundamental situation. This is a microcosm of the difficulties the Joint Force will face.

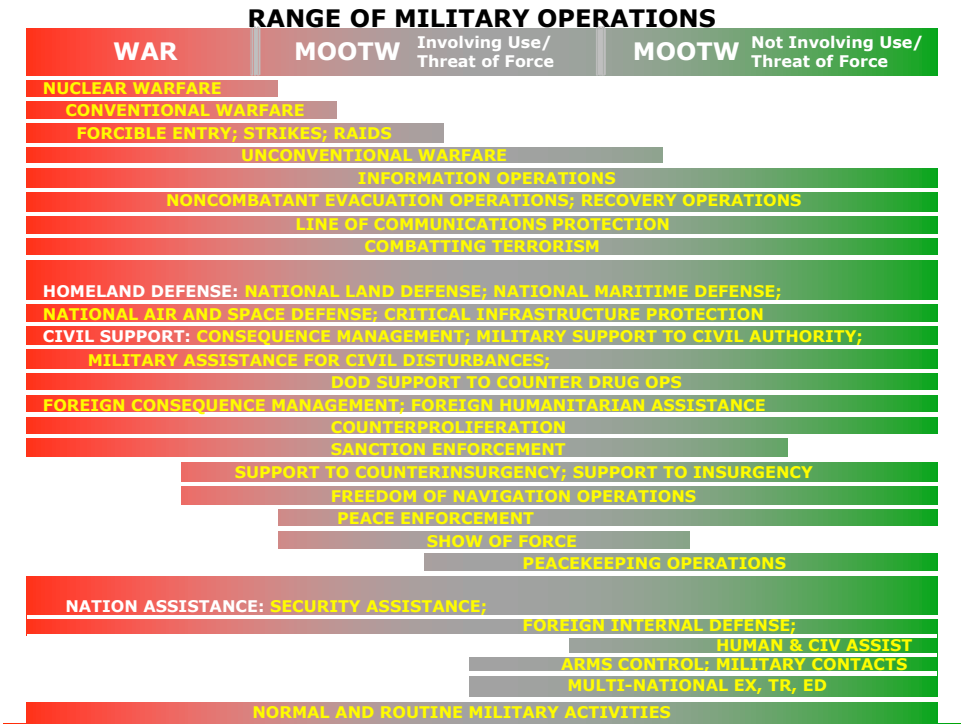
Implications for the Joint Force

SSCs, LCs, and SASOs, often in difficult situations, will continue to impose a key demand on the capabilities of the Army as a member of the Joint Force. While we may be able generally to predict which countries may be in danger of failing or facing major problems, it is difficult to predict either the timing of possible interventions or the political will or perceived US need to intervene to stabilize a country or region. **At the same time, the Joint Force will have to be ready to deal with traditional threats. Conducting major combat operations against a capable regional adversary or adversarial coalition remains the most demanding mission for the Joint Force**.

This could occur at the same time that traditional state-based armies, sub-national paramilitaries, transnational terrorists and even sophisticated organized crime syndicates are all becoming more capable and more dangerous. The diffusion of power and military capabilities to non-state actors and unpredictable regimes have become another potent threat to our homeland and our interests abroad. Dealing with these threats, individually or in combination, will likely demand comprehensive, decisive and often simultaneous actions by the US and its allies.

The most dangerous future conflict will depend on the situation—for example it could be conflict with non-state actors who possess WMD or with a generally low tech state that has developed or bought a nuclear weapon and is prepared to use it as a last resort. After 9/11 and the increasing threats to the continental US, military forces will increasingly be called upon to support the "Defending the Homeland" missions. At the same time, the enemies of the US perceive that asymmetric warfare against the US homeland works and that terrorism and insurgency warfare works against the US in Iraq. **The only way to counter an asymmetric threat against US vulnerabilities is to adapt faster than our opponents, which requires adaptive organizations and a learning culture.**

Therefore, the range of military operations has never been larger. Military units and soldiers, though without peers in high-intensity warfare, must be able to operate across the spectrum of conflict, especially in SASO and in Irregular Warfare. These capabilities must allow our forces to counter any capabilities our adversaries may employ. We must be able to transition rapidly and seamlessly between missions or conduct simultaneous different missions with an appropriate mix of forces and capabilities—from SSCs and LCs, which can easily involve mission creep, the GWOT, as well as the need to deal with traditional threats. Indeed, in any of these situations warfare may be increasingly bi-modal, with high end niche military competition at one end and increasing irregular warfare at the other.



The **changing character of war increases the need for integrated operations**. We must be able to integrate activities in Joint, interagency, and multinational environments. In order to address more diffuse and networked adversaries, we must integrate our own elements of power-- diplomatic, military, economic, and information. Countering threats to US interests in a more interconnected security environment requires **mutually supporting regional actions integrated within a global strategy**.

The necessity for security cooperation endures. While retaining the ability to act unilaterally, we must prepare to act with our friends and allies and remain fully engaged overseas. Security cooperation activities help shape the environment to prevent conflict and facilitate US operations in regions that may otherwise be difficult to access.

Transformation of the Joint Force is a strategic imperative to ensure U.S. forces continue to operate from a position of overwhelming military advantage in support of strategic objectives.

The current and projected security environment suggests that the US will often confront simultaneous challenges around the globe. Recent events present new realities: **first**, the United States is increasingly challenged by a diverse and dangerous set of potential adversaries that range from rising regional powers to terrorist movements and irresponsible regimes unbounded by accepted restraints governing international behavior; **second**, the situation in Iraq has not stabilized and it is still unclear how long the U.S. will be involved there; **third**, the world looks to the US for leadership in a crisis – to the point of hazarding inaction without American participation; and finally, in many instances, only the United States has the requisite capabilities to affect enduring resolutions and acceptable outcomes for complex crises.